

WANDERERS TAKE OVER AT THE TOP

By **STUART EARP** Tilbury 0, Wycombe Wanderers 2

A GOAL after just 15 seconds put Wycombe Wanderers on the road to victory in the Rothmans Isthmian League at Tilbury on Saturday. The three points lifts them into top place for the first time this season, although the chasing clubs all have games in hand.

Matches of this sort are never easy and after a long journey Wanderers found the conditions difficult from the start. The pitch was bumpy and slippery while a strong wind caused all sorts of problems.

But the Blues set about their task well and were

given a real boost when Ian Pearson put them ahead before most of us had settled in our seats. A second half goal by Alan Phillips — his first of the season — sealed the points.

Wycombe manager Ted Powell kept the side that had lost to Slough the previous week and brought in Tony Price at substitute. And he must have been pleased by the hard work of his side and especially the performance of his back four.

Both Phillips and Keith Mead had fine games in the centre of defence and Mead, in fact, scarcely put a foot

wrong throughout the 90 minutes. There can be few to match him for sheer consistency.

Wanderers faced the stiff breeze in the first half but shocked Tilbury with a goal straight from the kick off. As usual the ball was played back for Mead to pump forward.

Howard Kettleborough got up well to head the ball on for Dylan Evans to try for goal. Dylan swung but miscued and the ball hit a defender before rolling out to Pearson some 12 yards out. Although the angle was acute, Ian made no mistake with a well struck

shot.

Tilbury hit back with two swift corners but Kettleborough twice went close to increasing the lead, the second occasion after a fine run by Pearson.

But that early supremacy was not to last and Tilbury, going forward at speed, began to look more and more dangerous. West Indian 'Mitch' Mitchell forced a good stop from John Maskell in the 19th minute who was again quickly in action to foil Nick Smith nine minutes later.

Tilbury piled up corner after corner as Wycombe were forced

to retreat but due to the sterling defensive displays of the centre backs, and Tilbury's lack of ideas up front, the scoresheet remained blank after 45 minutes. The corner ratio, by the way, was 11-1 to Tilbury!

Wanderers must have been pretty satisfied with their work in the first half for they now had all the elements in their favour. Unfortunately, things didn't quite go as planned.

The wind certainly dropped a little but the Blues failed to make use of it as effectively as Tilbury. It was the home side, in fact, who had the better of the half territorially but once again, their front three got little change from the Wanderers defence.

WORRALL BOOKED

John Worrall went into referee Cox's book for a 50th minute foul on Dave Bullock, a rather unlucky caution and caused probably by Worrall's arguing after the free kick had been awarded.

Wycombe brought on Price for Evans after 73 minutes and two minutes later Wycombe snatched their second goal, which virtually put them out of reach.

From a corner, the ball was played out by Pearson to Mick Hollifield who drove over a cross. Phillips rose well and side-headed the ball over goalkeeper Barry Willson and a defender on the line. Alan doesn't get many goals in a season and he was delighted with this one that was perfectly placed.

The Blues were able to relax a little after the second goal and Pearson almost made it three when Willson tipped the ball over the crossbar.

MITCHELL SKILLS

Tilbury fought bravely for some sort of reply but relied solely on the skills of Mitchell, whose pace caused Bullock a few anxious moments. But Dave struck to his task well and brought off some good tackles when he stayed close to his man.

It was Mitchell who hit the woodwork in the 87th minute when Bullock lost possession inside the box. 'Mitch' jinked to one side and cracked a shot that thudded against an upright.

There was just time for Price to show his paces with one 40 yard run before the whistle went to signal yet another Wycombe away victory — their sixth of the season.

TILBURY: B. Willson, J. Allen, R. Jarman, (sub K. Russell 84 mins), D. Barnett, T. Majoram, J. Lewis, B. Walder, N. Smith, J. Worrall, V. Cotter, M. Mitchell.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell, D. Bullock, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies, H. Kennedy, P. Birdseye, M. Hollifield, I. Pearson, H. Kettleborough, D. Evans (Sub. A. Price 73 mins).

Referee: D. Cox.

Half-time: 0-1. **Goalscorers,** Wycombe — Pearson (15 sec), Phillips (75).

Attendance: 491.